

**Submission
No 10**

INQUIRY INTO REGIONAL PLANNING PROCESSES IN NSW

Organisation: Kempsey Shire Council

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Office of the Mayor

lc.lod

14 December 2015

Ms Melinda Pavey MP
Member for Oxley
PO Box 3120
West Kempsey NSW 2440

Dear Ms Pavey

Melinda

Upper House Inquiry into Regional Planning Processes in NSW

Thank you for providing Kempsey Shire Council with the opportunity to contribute to the above Inquiry.

NSW Government Planning rules and regulations have a significant impact on both Council - whose role it is to implement the rules - and the Kempsey Shire community. As such, this Inquiry is most welcome and Council is supportive of the need for new Planning legislation within NSW as the current system is complex and difficult for people to understand.

In reviewing the Planning system, protections that allow opportunities to stimulate regional development are vital. Care needs to be taken that conditions and requirements that may be needed in metropolitan areas are not placed on regional and rural areas where the same environmental pressures do not apply. There needs to be a balance between proper controls to prevent inappropriate development, with legislation that makes it simpler for development to move into areas better suited to its usage.

I understand the idea of a separate regional Planning Act has been suggested. I am not supportive of this approach as it has the potential to increase duplication, complexity and red tape. A single revised Act designed to provide effective strategic planning via stronger regional and sub-regional strategies, whilst retaining provisions for issues of true State significance, is the preferred model. It is also imperative that such strategies be administered at a regional level with far greater autonomy than is currently the case.

The current planning instruments essentially promote centralisation of population into metropolitan and heavily populated regional centres. It would be better if the planning framework was developed to look at how best to drive investment and distribute population and industry to include other regional and rural centres to achieve the most beneficial outcomes overall. This would require clear strategic goals and information to outline the benefits of driving development in certain directions.

I understand Planning legislation to be a tool to support the economic growth strategy for the State, balancing environmental factors and social impacts to find the optimum outcome. Good Planning legislation has the potential to deliver greater outcomes across all regional areas, and not just focused on reacting to current growth pressures in major centres at the expense of smaller communities.

Council welcomes the opportunity to contribute further to this Inquiry about the benefits for an improved Planning system on the future welfare of our Shire and other regional areas, and looks forward to participating in the public hearings to be held in 2016.

In the meantime, if you would like any further information, please don't hesitate to contact me directly.

Kind regards

Liz Campbell
MAYOR